

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 10528 01 OF 02 231642Z
ACTION NODS-00

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R 231455Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6523

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 10528

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG, US, LY
SUBJECT: FURTHER EGYPTIAN REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO
SADAT ON SOVIET MESSAGE RE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN INTENTIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 095802, (B) CAIRO 7324

SUMMARY: MINSTATE MOHAMED RIAD SUGGESTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S
EARLIER ORAL MESSAGE TO SADAT INTERPRETED HERE AS URGING GOE
TO MEND ITS FENCES WITH SOVIETS. THUS, IT WAS INDIRECTLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR FAHMY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. AMBASSADOR POINTED
OUT ANY SUCH SUGGESTION FAR-FETCHED. MESSAGE OFFERED NO
ADVICE ON DEALING WITH SOVIETS. EGYPTIANS DID NOT ASK US
TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED VISIT, NOR DID WE SEEK DO SO. IN
CONTRAST OUR EFFORTS KEEP EGYPTIANS BRIEFED ON OUR TALKS
WITH SOVIETS RE MIDDLE EAST, FAHMY HAS RECIPROCATED VERY
SKIMPILY. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING HAD BEEN MUCH
APPRECIATED AND HELPFUL. FAHMY CONTINUES BE RETICENT TELL
US ABOUT HIS DEALINGS WITH SOVIETS. AMBASSADOR HAS
REMINDING HIM SEVERAL TIMES THAT COOPERATION IS TWO-WAY
STREET AND THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR SHARE. SOVIETS HAVE
AROUSED FAHMY'S SUSPICIONS THAT WE ARE TELLING THEM A
GREAT DEAL MORE ABOUT OUR NEGOTIATING POSITIONS THAN WE
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 10528 01 OF 02 231642Z

ADMIT TO EGYPT. THERE IS ALSO WIDESPREAD SPECULATION
LOCALLY THAT USG IS SEEKING PREVENT ANY NORMALIZATION
OF EGYPTIAN/SOVIET RELATIONS, WHICH FAHMY HAS SOUGHT
COUNTER BY CLAIMING USG ENCOURAGING GOE IMPROVE RELA-
TIONS WITH SOVIETS. END SUMMARY.

1. REF B REPORTED FAHMY'S INITIAL REACTION WHEN I

DELIVERED PRESIDENT CARTER'S EARLIER ORAL MESSAGE TO SADAT ON THE SOVIET MESSAGE RE LIBYA. SADAT HAS NEVER MENTIONED THE SUBJECT, ALTHOUGH FAHMY HAS ON OCCASION ALLUDED TO THE MESSAGE AS NOT HAVING BEEN VERY HELPFUL. EVERY TIME HE HAS DONE SO, I HAVE REJECTED THIS DESCRIPTION. I HAVE REMINDED HIM THAT HE HAD NOT ASKED ANYTHING SPECIFIC FROM US WHEN SENDING SADAT'S ORAL MESSAGE ON THE SOVIET MEMORANDUM (CAIRO 7065). IN TYPICAL FAHMY FASHIPN, HE HAS SIMPLY GRUMBLED THAT WE ARE NOT AS ALIVE TO THE SOVIET THREAT IN AFRICA AS WE SHOULD BE.

2. AT DINNER TWO EVENINGS AGO WITH MINSTATE MOHAMMED RIAD, HE RAISED SUBJECT AND SOUGHT TO CONNECT PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE WITH FAHMY'S TRIP TO MOSCOW. OUR MESSAGE, HE CLAIMED, HAD BEEN INTERPRETED BY TOP EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP AS URGING GOE TO MEND ITS FENCES WITH THE SOVIETS. BOTH FAHMY AND HE HAD SO INTERPRETED IT AND HAD MADE THIS POINT TO SADAT. IT HAD BEEN USEFUL IN GETTING A RELUCTANT SADAT TO AGREE TO FAHMY'S URGINGS THAT A NEW EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. OUT OF THIS HAD COME IN DUE COURSE THE FAHMY VISIT TO MOSCOW.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 10528 02 OF 02 231648Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 10528

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

3. I REMINDED RIAD THAT OUR MESSAGE HAD SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD NOT PRESUME TO ADVISE SADAT ON HIS DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS AND TRUSTED SADAT'S JUDGMENT. WE HAD ALSO OPINED SOVIETS WOULD END UP "WISER BUT SADDER" FROM THE AFFAIR. WE HAD INDEED EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SITUATION WOULD BE

RESOLVED WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVE OF WORKING FOR EARLY RECONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, SUGGESTION THAT FAHMY'S DECISION TO GO TO MOSCOW ATTRIBUTABLE TO OUR ORAL MESSAGE WAS A BIT FAR-FETCHED.

4. DECISION MAKE THE VISIT WAS CLEARLY SOLELY AN EGYPTIAN ONE. AT NO TIME WERE WE ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED VISIT. NOR DID WE SEEK TO OFFER ANY GRATUITIOUS ADVICE. AS A MATTER FACT, I HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT SURPRISED THAT FAHMY MADE NO EFFORT TO TELL US ABOUT THE PROPOSED VISIT TO MOSCOW. THOUGH THIS WAS HIS RIGHT, IT WAS HARDLY CONSISTENT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT'S EXPRESS STATEMENT TO ME PRIOR TO THE MOSCOW TRIP THAT WE MUST CONSULT CLOSELY ON OUR RESPECTIVE DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS ON THE MIDDLE EAST. ON OUR PART, WE HAD DONE SO. WE HAD RESPONDED TO FAHMY'S
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 10528 02 OF 02 231648Z

REQUEST FOR SOME PRIOR INDICATION OF WHAT SECRETARY VANCE INTENDED TO DISCUSS WITH MOSCOW IN GENEVA AND SUBSEQUENTLY PROVIDED A BRIEFING ON THE ME PORTIONS OF THE VANCE/GROMYKO TALKS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEY HAD FINISHED. FAHMY HAD GIVEN ME A CURSORY ACCOUNT OF THE MOSCOW TALKS, BUT FIRST REAL BRIEFING WE HAD ON THEM HAD COME FROM PRESIDENT SADAT THE PREVIOUS DAY. THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION IN DOING SO WAS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WAS HELPFUL TO US.

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER FAHMY WAS AWARE IN ADVANCE THAT SADAT WOULD BRIEF ME ON MOSCOW TALKS. WITHOUT WANTING TO READ MORE INTO IT THAN IS WARRANTED, FAHMY CONTINUES TO BE RETICENT IN TELLING US ABOUT HIS DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS. I HAVE REMINDED HIM IN FRIENDLY FASHION SEVERAL TIMES THAT COOPERATION IS A TWOAWAY STREET AND THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR PART. FAHMY REMAINS CONVINCED THAT WE HAVE TOLD SOVIETS MORE ON OUR ME PLANS THAN WE ADMIT TO THE EGYPTIANS. I HAVE SOUGHT TO DISABUSE HIM OF THIS NOTION, BUT THE SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY PUT ON A GOOD LINE IN CLAIMING TO KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT OUR NEGOTIATING POSITIONS. THEY SUCCEED IN INDUCING ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY IN FAHMY'S MIND AND AROUSE HIS LATENT SUSPICIONS. SUGGESTION THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ORAL MESSAGE TO SADAT CATALYZED FAHMY TRIP TO MOSCOW IS A NEW WRINKLE. IT IS PARTLY AN APOLOGIA, BUT ALSO FITS BYZANTINE EGYPTIAN THINKING PROCESSES.

6. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, THERE IS ALSO WIDESPREAD SPECULATION LOCALLY THAT USG IS SEEKING PREVENT ANY NORMALIZATION OF EGYPTIAN/SOVIET RELATIONS; FAHMY HAS

SOUGHT TO COUNTER THIS BY CLAIMING WE ARE ENCOURAGING
GOE IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS. SINCE
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 10528 02 OF 02 231648Z

RIAD IS CLOSE TO FAHMY AND MAY BE EXPECTED TO PASS ON
ANY COMMENTS, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO SPEAK FRANKLY TO HIM.
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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